



**CITY OF ISLAND PARK**  
**3753 North Highway 20-PO Box 254**  
**Island Park, Idaho 83429**  
**Office: 208-558-7687 Fax: 208-558-9867**

March 10, 2023

Congressman Mike Simpson  
Eastern Idaho Regional Office  
1075 S Utah Avenue West #240  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

**SUBJ: City of Island Park Municipal Public Water System, Letter of Support**

Dear Congressman Simpson,

Being born in Idaho and raised in Eastern Idaho, you know the importance of the Island Park area to the economy of this part of the state. Island Park has a long history as a destination for locals on weekend getaways, tourists on their way to Yellowstone National Park, and people seeking to enjoy outdoor recreation. You may even be familiar with the history of water quality issues in Island Park. Island Park features over 50 separate public water systems, many of which have experienced multiple instances of bacterial contamination since their inception, which extends back several decades. We need a solution to this widespread problem.

Several water systems, particularly those in the Mack's Inn and Sawtelle areas have seen recent increase in the number of incidences of positive hits in their required sampling for total coliform and e coli bacteria which result in boil orders for their patrons. The water quality issues are well known by locals and visitors and impact the local economy. It is difficult to sell soft drinks from your store when you have to post a sign that the drinking water, including the water supplied to the pop machine, must be boiled before consumed.

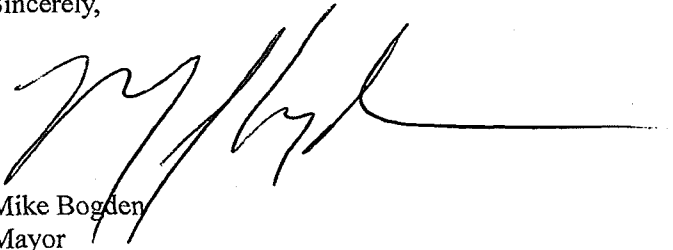
In fact, DEQ conducted an investigation of water quality throughout Island Park and published its findings which validate what has long been suspected; the geology in the Island Park caldera is volcanic material of a porous nature with numerous fissures which allows surface water to penetrate the soil into the shallow aquifer where most of the groundwater wells draw their water. This condition is exacerbated in areas that have homes concentrated, especially where existing or abandoned septic tanks are common.

Three years ago, a new well was drilled for the Mack's Inn water system that penetrated deeper into the ground and into a lower aquifer that is hydraulically isolated from the shallower surface aquifer. This provides a solution to the problem, but only if we can work together cooperatively to keep this aquifer

pristine. Municipal wells afford several advantages to users of the system including access to deeper pristine aquifers, less up-front costs, and guaranteed year-round water. Additionally, a reduction in the number of individual holes punched into the aquifer will greatly reduce the risk of further contamination. The City of Island Park provides the most practical organization to bring the various water systems together into a single municipally owned public water system.

The elected officials in Island Park support the evaluation and implementation of a municipal water system. My city council is unanimously in favor of pursuing the project and voted to support the study and the city developing a water system to help our residents and homeowners. I would personally appreciate your support for this funding application as would the citizens of Island Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Bogden', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mike Bogden  
Mayor  
City of Island Park, Idaho

March 10, 2023

Congressman Mike Simpson  
Eastern Idaho Regional Office  
1075 S Utah Avenue West #240  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

**SUBJ: Island Park Municipal Water System, Letter of Support**

Dear Congressman Simpson,

The Big 12 Water Association is a small public water system located in the Mack's Inn area of Island Park. Our association was formally organized in 1957 to manage a water system that served 19 cabins. While the patrons believed that system worked well for quite a few years, albeit with an occasional positive sample for coliform bacteria, increasing regulations that required more sampling and testing of the water over the past two decades have informed us that we have more water quality issues than we realized. Those issues may explain some of the previously unexplained illnesses for some of our citizens over the years.

Because of the water samples positive for bacteria, DEQ issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) on December 7, 2017, and informed the owners of the Big Twelve Water System that the water system was disapproved and was subject to a boil advisory wherein all consumers were advised to boil water from the system before consumption. Ultimately, DEQ, District 7 Health, representatives from the Big 12 and their engineer (Civilize) met on January of 2018 to discuss compliance and to initiate a Consent Order. Subsequent to the conference, DEQ issued the Consent Order along with a compliance schedule which the Big 12 signed on February 7, 2018. The Consent Order requires the system owner to remedy the contamination with one of the following corrective actions: 1) correct all significant deficiencies, 2.) provide an alternate source of drinking water, 3.) eliminate the source of contamination, or 4.) provide treatment that reliably achieves 4-log treatment of viruses before the first customer.

DEQ has been very helpful in working with us to implement a remedy and to comply with the parameters of the Consent Order. We have completed our feasibility study and have found that the best solution is to combine with other water systems, preferably under the auspices of a municipal water system owned by the City of Island Park. Regardless of the solution, it is expensive, much more than what is affordable for the homes in the service area for the Big 12 Water Association.

Our cabins are smaller historic homes that have been in place for decades, not the expansive vacation homes that people build today. As the President of the Big 12 Water Association representing the 19 connections of our very small water system, I am requesting you consider some funding for implementing the Island Park Municipal Water System, which will not only help us, but will also help another 200 connections in the Mack's Inn area that have similar issues with drinking water quality per the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Sincerely,

*Gene Weeks*

Gene Weeks, President  
Big 12 Water Association